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Utah's Birth Rate is in Rapid Decline, But Still Tops All Other States

Beehive State is Among the Nation's Leaders in Youth Recreation Investments, But Lags in Youth Organizations

(May 16, 2022) – Today, the Utah Foundation releases the sixth report in its Utah Social Capital Series with *The Flowering of Youth: The Next Generation in Utah*. This installment focuses on the extent to which Utah addresses the needs of the next generation; the previous installments focused on civic engagement, social trust, community life, family life and social cohesion.

The Flowering of Youth presents data and analysis in four areas: the birth rate; investments in recreation; investments in public schools; and the ratio of children to the number of youth organizations. It looks at Utah's performance on these measures over time, comparing the Beehive State both to the seven other Mountain States and to the nation at large.

Among the findings of the new report:

- Though Utah's public investments in parks and recreation (relative to income) have generally been in decline, the state remains in the top five nationally.
- Utah's state and local expenditures on primary and secondary education per \$1,000 of personal income declined by a notable amount from 2008 to 2019, falling more than one-fifth. Utah is now below the national average on this metric.
- While Utah's birth rate has been in precipitous decline, the Beehive State still leads the nation.
- Utah and neighboring Arizona are last in the nation when it comes to the number of youth organizations per 1,000 children aged 5 to 17. This is not typical of the region: Wyoming and Montana are the nation's most prolific.
- The decline in funding effort both for education and recreation in Utah and elsewhere comes alongside a decline in the birth rate. It is possible that these downward trends are intertwined. Taken together, however, the trends suggest the focus on the next generation has become less sharp.

Utah Foundation President Peter Reichard said that the extent to which a society attends to the needs of its children says much about its effort to build social capital into the future. "For a society to thrive, children must find opportunities to cultivate both hard and soft skills, and reach their physical and mental potential," Reichard said.

The Flowering of Youth: The Next Generation in Utah is available on the Utah Foundation website at www.utahfoundation.org. Special thanks to the **George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation** and the **Lawrence T. & Janet T. Dee Foundation** for providing project-based support to the Utah Social Capital Series.

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Founded in 1945, the Utah Foundation's mission is to produce objective, thorough and well-reasoned research and analysis that promotes the effective use of public resources, a thriving economy, a well-prepared workforce and a high quality of life for Utahns. The Utah Foundation seeks to help decision-makers and citizens understand and address complex issues. The Utah Foundation also offers constructive guidance to improve governmental policies, programs and structures.

The Utah Foundation is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research organization.